

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method for providing automated delivery of a response to a pricing inquiry comprising the steps of:
 - (a) receiving an inquiry requesting the price of an item;
 - (b) determining the price of the item based on a set of predetermined criteria;
 - (c) modifying the determined price based on application of various predetermined rules;
 - (d) determining whether or not the modified price is to be compared to a target price; and
 - (e) providing a price quote that reflects a weighted price, the weighted price being either the modified price or the target price.
2. A method for providing automated delivery of a response to a pricing inquiry as recited in claim 1, wherein application of the various predetermined rules results in said determined price.
3. A method for providing automated delivery of a response to a pricing inquiry as recited in claim 1, wherein said predetermined criteria is selected from at least one of the group consisting of terms of a contract, terms of a market price program, terms of a requote, and selections from a reference price table.
4. A method for providing automated delivery of a response to a pricing inquiry as recited in claim 1, wherein said various predetermined rules are selected from at least one of the group consisting of a set of business rules, a set of value added services rules, and a set of price channel conversion rules.
5. A method for providing automated delivery of a response to a pricing inquiry as recited in claim 4, wherein said set of business rules is comprised of filter criteria selected from information from at least one of the group consisting of customer identifier, customer category, customer classification, geography, sales channel, contract, competition, target pricing, quantity, date, delivery schedule, part identifier, product type, product family, and value added requirements.

6. A method for providing automated delivery of a response to a pricing inquiry as recited in claim 4, wherein said price channel conversion rules are applied where the inquiry is received from a distributor.

7. A method for providing automated delivery of a response to a pricing inquiry as recited in claim 1, wherein the weighted price is selected from at least one of the group consisting of a highest price, lowest price, and an initially quoted price.

8. A method for providing automated delivery of a response to a pricing inquiry as recited in claim 1, wherein determining a price of the item based on predetermined criteria further comprises the sub-steps of ascertaining whether the predetermined criteria involves terms of a market price program or terms of a contract, or terms of a requote or selections from a reference price table.

9. A method for providing automated delivery of a response to a pricing inquiry as recited in claim 8, wherein ascertaining whether the predetermined criteria involves terms of a market price program or terms of a contract further comprises the sub-steps of ascertaining whether the inquiry involves a distributor, wherein involvement of a distributor results in application of a set of price channel conversion rules.

10. A method for providing automated delivery of a response to a pricing inquiry as recited in claim 9, wherein said price channel conversion rules are selected from at least one of the group consisting of distributor cost and distributor resale.

11. A method for providing automated delivery of a response to a pricing inquiry as recited in claim 8, wherein ascertaining whether the predetermined criteria involves terms of a requote or selections from a reference price table further comprises the sub-steps of providing a quote response that reflects an initial quoted price where the criteria involves terms of a requote and providing a quote response that reflects one of a plurality of selections from the reference price table where the criteria does not involve terms of a requote.

12. A method for providing automated delivery of a response to a pricing inquiry as recited in claim 1, wherein modifying the determined price based on application of

said various predetermined rules further comprises the steps of applying one or more of a plurality of business rule types where a set of business rules apply, applying one of a plurality of value added services charges where a set of value added services rules apply, applying a conversion factor where a set of price channel conversion rules applies.

13. A method for providing automated delivery of a response to a pricing inquiry as recited in claim 12, wherein the plurality of business rule types is selected from at least one of the group consisting of a column rule, a columnX rule, a discount rule, an incremental rule, a markup rule, a please call rule, and a sale rule.

14. A method for providing automated delivery of a response to a pricing inquiry as recited in claim 12, wherein the plurality of value added services charges are dependent upon services selected from at least one of the group consisting of special handling, packaging, and programming.

15. A method for providing automated delivery of a response to a pricing inquiry as recited in claim 12, wherein the conversion factor is selected from at least one of the group consisting of a markup from an OEM price to a distributor resale factor and a conversion from a distributor resale to a distributor cost factor, wherein the conversion from the distributor resale to the distributor cost factor is dependent on distributor registration.

16. A computer program embodied on a computer readable medium for providing automated delivery of a response to a pricing inquiry comprising:

- (a) a code segment that receives an inquiry requesting a price of an item;
- (b) a code segment that determines a price of the item based on a set of predetermined criteria;
- (c) a code segment that modifies the determined price based on application of various predetermined rules;
- (d) a code segment that determines whether or not to compare the modified price to a target price; and
- (e) a code segment that provides a price quote that reflects a weighted price, the weighted price being either the modified price or the target price.

1 17. A computer program embodied on a computer readable program for providing
2 automated delivery of a response to a pricing inquiry as recited in claim 16, wherein
3 application of the various predetermined rules results in a code segment that provides
4 said determined price as the response to the inquiry.

1 18. A computer program embodied on a computer readable program for providing
2 automated delivery of a response to a pricing inquiry as recited in claim 16, wherein
3 said predetermined criteria is selected from at least one of the group consisting of
4 terms of a contract, terms of a market price program, terms of a requote, and
5 selections from a reference price table.

1 19. A computer program embodied on a computer readable program for providing
2 automated delivery of a response to a pricing inquiry as recited in claim 16, wherein
3 said various predetermined rules are selected from at least one of the group consisting
4 of a set of business rules, a set of value added services rules, and a set of price channel
5 conversion rules.

1 20. A computer program embodied on a computer readable program for providing
2 automated delivery of a response to a pricing inquiry as recited in claim 19, wherein
3 said set of business rules is comprised of a filter criteria code segment selected from
4 information from at least one of the group consisting of customer identifier, customer
5 category, customer classification, geography, sales channel, contract, competition,
6 target pricing, quantity, date, delivery schedule, part identifier, product type, product
7 family, and value added requirements.

1 21. A computer program embodied on a computer readable program for providing
2 automated delivery of a response to a pricing inquiry as recited in claim 19, wherein
3 said price channel conversion rules are applied where the inquiry is received from a
4 distributor.

1 22. A computer program embodied on a computer readable program for providing
2 automated delivery of a response to a pricing inquiry as recited in claim 16, wherein
3 the weighted price is selected from at least one of the group consisting of a highest
4 price, lowest price, and an initially quoted price.

1 23. A system for providing automated delivery of a response to a pricing inquiry
2 comprising:
3 (a) means for receiving an inquiry requesting a price of an item;
4 (b) means for determining a price of the item based on a set of predetermined
5 criteria;
6 (c) means for modifying the determined price based on application of various
7 predetermined rules;
8 (d) means for selectively comparing the modified price to a target price; and
9 (e) means for providing a price quote that reflects a weighted price, the
10 weighted price being either the modified price or the target price.

1 24. A method for providing automated delivery of a response to a pricing inquiry as
2 recited in claim 23, wherein application of the various predetermined rules results in
3 said determined price.

1 25. A method for providing automated delivery of a response to a pricing inquiry as
2 recited in claim 23, wherein said predetermined criteria is selected from at least one of
3 the group consisting of terms of a contract, terms of a market price program, terms of
4 a quote, and selections from a reference price table.

1 26. A method for providing automated delivery of a response to a pricing inquiry as
2 recited in claim 23, wherein said various predetermined rules are selected from at
3 least one of the group consisting of a set of business rules, a set of value added
4 services rules, and a set of price channel conversion rules.

1 27. A method for providing automated delivery of a response to a pricing inquiry as
2 recited in claim 26, wherein said set of business rules is comprised of filter criteria
3 selected from information from at least one of the group consisting of customer
4 identifier, customer category, customer classification, geography, sales channel,
5 contract, competition, target pricing, quantity, date, delivery schedule, part identifier,
6 product type, product family, and value added requirements.

- 1 28. A method for providing automated delivery of a response to a pricing inquiry as
2 recited in claim 26, wherein said price channel conversion rules are applied where the
3 inquiry is received from a distributor.
- 1 29. A method for providing automated delivery of a response to a pricing inquiry as
2 recited in claim 23, wherein the weighted price is selected from at least one of the
3 group consisting of a highest price, lowest price, and an initially quoted price.